In the name of Allaah Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

THE RIGHTS OF THE NEIGHBOURS

By:
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Preface

Praise be to Allaah; we praise Him and seek His help and forgiveness. We seek refuge with him from the evils of our own souls and deeds. Whomever Allaah guides, no-one can lead astray and whomever He leaves astray, no-one can guide. I bear witness that there is no illah but Allaah Alone, Who has no partner and I bear witness that Muhammad is His Bondsman and Rasul ρ.

Encouraged by elders in our locality we translated the work of Mufti Muhammad Israar. Subsequently, we found a booklet by Sheikh Ali Hasan Ali Abdul Hameed entitled ‘Neighbour’s Rights’. The underlying is extracted from the latter as additional information to the former to make the work more comprehensive in nature.

1) Al-Qurtubi (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:
   “On this basis, concern for neighbours is a religious duty regardless of whether they are Muslim or Kafir and this is the sound (Sahih) opinion.”
   Ihsan (doing good) could mean consoling him, treating him kindly, refraining from disturbing him and defending him.”
2) Ibn Hajar said:
   “Ibn Wahb reported from Yunus from Ibn Shihab: Forty houses to the right, to the left, to the rear and to the front.” (Fath al-Bari, vol. 10, pg 447. This Hadith comes under the heading Haqq al-Jiwar fi Qurb Al-Abwab (The Rights of Neighbours whose doors are close).

   Al-Halimi said:

   “As for the travelling companion, he is a neighbour, because he shares one’s physical space and travelling companions

have much to offer to each other as is the case with neighbours in the same market or village. This is why Allaah has commanded us to take care of him (the travelling companion) and Allaah knows best.” (Shu’ab al-Iman, vol. 3, pg. 358)

3) Ibn Abdul Barr said:

“There are three characteristics which, if they are found in a man, there is no doubt that he is a sane and a good man: if he is praised by his neighbour, by his relatives and by his friends.”

“Three things make life unbearable: a bad neighbour, a disobedient child and a badly-behaved and unreasonable wife.” (Ibn Muflih, op. Cit. Vol. 2, pg. 15-16)

Al-Hasan ibn Isa an-Naisburi narrated:

“I asked Abdullaah ibn al-Mubarak: ‘A man came to me and complained about something my servant did and my servant denies it. I would hate to punish him if he is innocent but I would hate to let him off as my neighbour will be upset with me. What should I do?’ Abdullaah ibn al-Mubarak said: ‘May be your servant needs to be disciplined for something he did, so bear that in mind. When your neighbour complains about him, discipline him for what you are sure he has done so that you will satisfy your neighbour and discipline your servant for what he did.” (Al-Khara’iti, Al-Muntaqa min Makarim Al-Akhlaq (no.101), quoted by as-Salafi.)’

4) Considering the welfare of the neighbour it is said:

“My fire and my neighbour’s fire is one; the cooking pot is given to him first. It does not matter to me that his doorway has no cover.” (Ibn Qutaybah, Ayun Al-Akbar vol. 2, pg 193.)

5) Being co-operative to neighbours

Hadhrat Abu Hurairah τ reported that Rasulullaah ρ said:

“None of you should prevent his neighbour from leaning wood against his walls.” (Bukhari, Hadith no. 2463 and Muslim hadith no. 1609.)

6) No deed which harms a neighbour can be regarded as insignificant

Abdah ibn Ali Lubabah, may Allaah have mercy on him, related that the Messenger of Allaah said:

“No deed which harms a neighbour can be regarded as insignificant.” (Ibn Abi Shaybah, vol. 8, pg 547 with a Sahih Mursal Isnad.)

7) Treating neighbours well

Hadhrat Abu Hurairah τ reported that Rasulullaah ρ said:
“Be Allaah-fearing: you will be the best in worship amongst the people. Be content with your lot; you will be the most grateful of people. Like for your people what you would like for yourself; you will be a Believer (Mu’min). Treat your neighbour well; you will be a Muslim.” (Ibn Majah, Hadith no. 4217.)

8) The Fitnah of neighbours

Hadhrat Huzaifa τ narrated that the Nabi ρ said:

“... a man’s committing sins (fitnah) with regard to his wife, his wealth, his children and his neighbour may be atoned for by prayer, fasting, giving charity and enjoining the good and

forbidding the evil ...” (Bukhari, Hadith no. 525 and Muslim hadith no. 144)

9) Giving charity (Sadaqah) to neighbours

Hadhrat Abu Sa’eed al-Khudri τ reported that the Rasul of Allaah ρ said:

“Charity may not be given to a rich person but it should be given to those fighting in the way of Allaah, to the wayfarer or to a poor neighbour who may later give a gift or invite you to his home.” (Abu Dawood, Hadith nos. 1635, 1636)

10) Co-operating with neighbours

Hadhrat Aisha τ narrated:

“By Allaah we used to watch the new moon, three new moons in the space of two months and no fire (for cooking) was lit in the house of the Rasul of Allaah ρ. (The narrator) said: ‘O Aunt! What did you live on?’ She said, ‘The two black ones; dates and water. But the Rasul of Allaah had Ansari neighbours who kept livestock and they used to send some of its milk to the Rasul of Allaah ρ and he used to give it to us to drink.” (Bukhari, Hadith no. 2567. Muslim, Hadith no. 2972.)

11) The neighbour before the house

It is narrated by Tabarani:

“... look for the neighbour before you look at the house...” (Al-Mujam Al-Kabir, Hadith no. 4379.)

12) How one should treat one’s neighbour if he is not a practicing Sunni Muslim

a. If your neighbour is committing a major sin in secret then advise him in secret against his actions.
b. If he is committing a major sin in public then advice him too – but desist from his company. Greet him, send him gifts and talk politely to him when needed to.
c. If he boasts about his wrong-doings and arrogantly disregards Haqq then avoid him altogether and try to move to another neighbourhood.
d. If your neighbour is an immoral person, careless in his attitude towards women and has no feelings of jealousy with regard to his own womenfolk's honour, or his womenfolk are immoral as well, then cut off all possible ties with him and, fearing the weakness of your own soul, do not enter his house and safe-guard your family from him. If you can persuade such people to move away from your neighbourhood then do so. If you cannot, then move yourself.

13) How to treat your non-Muslim neighbours

a. If your neighbour is a Shi'a or engages in major Bid'ah (innovations to Deen) then keep away from him completely or move away to another area.
b. If your neighbour (at work, home, or the market-place) is a Jew or a Christian then treat him well and do not disturb him.
c. It is permitted to visit him when he is ill and to offer condolences when he dies but not to attend his funeral rites.

d. Visiting them and congratulating them on the occasions of their festivals is not permitted – doing so implies acceptance of their religion which we know is distorted.
e. If your non-Muslim neighbour greets you with 'salaam' then simply reply, 'wa-alaykum'. It is permissible to exchange brief pleasantries with them but do not prolong such exchanges. Remember: we should not disturb them but we cannot befriend them as we befriend our fellow Muslims.

Epilogue

Neighbourhood has been described as those who are forty houses in four directions. Giving a neighbourhood of hundred and twenty houses. These days it will mean all kinds, types and residents having various religious affiliations. This is due to the cosmopolitan nature of settlements. The concept of having a Masjid, Madressah and Islaamic Institute for every 120 houses should become a norm.

By having simple and functional structures the inhabitants of the area will be able to walk to the Masjid. Through this there will be greater unity. Social and economical affairs will be easily maintained, controlled and supervised. Where there is a purely Muslim population a Masjid for every forty families should be implemented.

This concept today is practised in a place called Hara in Ethiopia where the Imaam is responsible for the spiritual and social needs of forty Muslim homes neighbouring his Masjid.

These days the tendency is to build huge Masaajids wherein only few worshippers frequent. This sad state of affairs does not bring the pleasure of Allaah. The solution to reap the pleasure of Allaah is small Masjids for forty families.

May Allaah Jalla Majdahi grant us all the ability to fulfil the rights of neighbours.

A H Elias (Mufti)
(May Allaah be with)
Shabaan 1430/August 2009

In the name of Allaah Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

Foreword

By:
Mufti NizaamuDeen Shaamzi (R.A)
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Islaam has stressed the fulfillment of the rights of all those who deserve certain rights, though the emphasis laid as regards the rights of the neighbour is perhaps unmatched. Time and again Jibraeel υ would advice Nabi ρ as regards the rights of the neighbour during his visits to Nabi ρ until such time that Nabi ρ thought that soon the neighbour will be entitled to inherit. It is for this reason that Nabi ρ has equated the consideration and fulfillment of the neighbour's rights as a ladder towards reaching perfection in Imaan.

Islaam has made no segregation in as far as religion, school of thought, or cultural back ground is concerned in stipulating or stressing the rights of the neighbour. Rather, it has left it general. No matter what religion one may be a follower of, simply because he is a human, all the rights that a neighbour deserves becomes binding on a Muslim to fulfill.

But alas, Muslims have become negligent and unconcerned as far the rights of one another are concerned; especially the fulfillment of rights of the neighbour is forgotten from the very root. As a result, day by day social life is become worse. At such a time, it is the duty of the Ulama to put a stop to the inevitable destruction which the Ummat is leading itself to.

A graduate of our institute, Mufti Muhammed Israar, has written a very beneficial booklet titled; The Rights of the neighbours. He has specifically discussed the aspect of the oppressive and impermissible manner of using the loud speaker.

Muslims should take maximum benefit from such booklets and make all efforts to implement it in their lives so that they are honored in both worlds.

We pray that Almighty Allaah rewards the author and grants his effort acceptance in his divine court, Aameen.

Nizaamudeen Shaamzi
Jamiah Uloom-e-Islaamia Allama Binnori Town Karachi.
29 Safar 1424 A.H

In the name of Allaah most Merciful, most Beneficent.

Besides ones parents and family, man has a constant link with those whom he lives amongst or is neighbour to. This link has a great influence on his happiness, grief, peace, comfort and character building or destruction.

Nabi ρ in his teachings and guidance has granted great honor and reverence to this link of a neighbour and has stressed upon the fulfillment of their rights, so much so that he has made it a pre-condition for the perfection of Imaan and entrance into paradise, and a yardstick to measure the love of Allaah and His Rasul ρ.

Read the following verses of the Quraan and Ahaadith of Nabi ρ regarding this subject matter:

“And worship none besides Allaah, and do not ascribe any partner to him. And be kind to your parents, relatives, the orphans, the destitute, the neighbours closest to you, and the neighbours far from you …” (Surah Nisaa *v.32*)

In the above verse, after having mentioned the fact that one should obey, worship and believe in Allaah alone, Allaah has (in order of merit) firstly mentioned the (importance of fulfilling the) rights of the parents, then emphasized being kind to all relatives, then the orphans and destitute, then the neighbour living close by, then the neighbour living at a distance, i.e. he has ordered us to show kindness to them.

Two types of neighbours have been mentioned in this verse, one who lives close by, and one who lives at a distance. The Sahaba τ have differed in their explanations of these two types. Most commentators say that the neighbour living close by refers to that neighbour whose home is adjoining yours, and the neighbour living at a distance refers to that neighbour whose home is separated at a slight distance from yours.

Hadhrat Abdullaah Ibn Abbaas τ says that the neighbour living close by refers to that neighbour, who in addition to being a neighbour is also a relative. In this way, such a neighbour enjoys two rights. (In his opinion) the neighbour living at a distance refers to a neighbour who is not a relative. Therefore, his status is lesser than the first type.

Some commentators have said that the neighbour living close by refers to that neighbour who is a Muslim, and the neighbour living at a distance refers to that neighbour who is a non-Muslim.

The words of the Quraan in any event encompass all these meanings. In reality, the argument of difference in status in as far as being a relative or not, being a Muslim or not, is logical and legitimate. Nevertheless, it is unanimously agreed upon, that irrespective of whether the neighbour lives in close proximity or not, whether he is family or not, whether he is a Muslim or not, **under all circumstances he has rights.** It is therefore incumbent to assist and see to the wellbeing of the neighbour according to an individual's capacity. (Mariful-Quraan *vol.3 pg.411-412* Tafseer Ibn Kathir *vol.1 pg.494*)

After having explained this verse, let us now read the Ahaadith of Rasulullaah ρ regarding the rights of the neighbour.

The repeated advice and emphasis of Jibraeel υ regarding the rights of the neighbour:

It has been reported from Hadhrat Ayesha ψ and Hadhrat Ibn Umar τ that Nabi ρ said, "Jibraeel υ repeatedly (on the order of Allaah) advised and emphasized upon me the rights of the neighbour, so much so that I began to think that he would soon include him (the neighbour) as an inheritor." (Bukhari *vol.2 pg.889,* Muslim *vol.2 pg.329,* Mariful Hadith *vol.2 pg.90*)

Commentary:

We learn the importance of being good, showing kindness, sharing the grief and happiness and not being of any source of difficulty or worry to the neighbour from the above mentioned Hadith. Therefore, we find that because of Jibraeel υ repeatedly, on the instruction of Allaah, advising Nabi ρ in this regard, Nabi ρ was convinced that he would soon bring revelation to the effect that neighbours should inherit from one another. (Mazaahir-e-Haq *vol.4 pg.541*)

It is clear that the objective is not to mention any particular incident, but rather this is an effective manner in showing the importance of the rights of the neighbour.

Honouring the neighbour:

Hadhrat Abu Shuraih Adawi τ narrates, "I have heard with my ears (from Nabi ρ) and seen Nabi ρ with my eyes saying: '"That person who believes in Allaah and the Day of Judgment should honor his neighbour. That person who believes in Allaah and the Day of Judgment should honor his guest. That person who believes in Allaah and the Day of Judgment should either speak of good or remain silent."' (Bukhari *vol.2 pg.889,* Muslim *vol.1 pg.50,* Majmauz Zawaaid *vol.8 pg.170*)

That person, who sleeps on a full stomach while his neighbour goes hungry, can never be a (true) believer:

Hadhrat Anas Ibn Maalik τ reports that Nabi ρ said, "He who sleeps on a full stomach while his neighbour goes hungry and he is aware of it, has not brought believe (Imaan) in me." (Musnad-e-Bazzaar, Mu'jame Kabir, Majmauz Zawaaid *vol.8 pg.170*)

The perimeters of a neighbour:

Hadhrat Abu Hurairah τ reports that Nabi ρ said, “The rights of the neighbour (exists) to forty homes in all four directions, to the right, to the left, to the front and to the back.” (In other words, forty homes in every direction are regarded as neighbours, and therefore have rights over a person.) (Musnad-e-Abu Ya’laa, Majmauz Zawaaid *vol.8 pg.171*)

Some of the stipulated rights of a neighbour:

Hadhrat Muaawiyah Bin Haidah τ says that he asked Nabi ρ, “What are the rights of a neighbour?” Nabi ρ said, “You should visit him when he is ill, attend his funeral (and assist in his burial) when he passes away, grant him a loan (according to your capacity) when he seeks one (for his necessities), conceal his faults, congratulate him on good that reaches him, console him when he is afflicted by a calamity, do not build your wall higher than his preventing (his home) from ventilation, do not let the fragrance of your food reach his home so as to cause difficulty to him (and his wife and children), accept that you (intend) sending some of the food to him.” (Tabrani, Majmauz Zawaaid *vol.8 pg.168*)

Increasing the gravy content of a meal:

Hadhrat Jaabir τ narrates that Nabi ρ said, “When anyone of you cooks a curry, he should increase the gravy content and send some of (the food) to the neighbour.” (Majmauz Zawaaid *vol.8 pg.168*)

Commentary:

The meaning of this is at the time of eating, one should take his neighbours into consideration. Should one not be able to send some curry, he should at least send some of the gravy so that his neighbour can fill his stomach.

Three categories of neighbours: (A non-Muslim neighbour also has rights)

Hadhrat Jaabir τ narrates that Nabi ρ said, "There are three types of neighbours. One who enjoys a single right, one who enjoys a double right, and one who enjoys a threefold right. The one who enjoys a single right is that neighbour who is a non Muslim who has no blood relation; he enjoys the rights of being a neighbour. The one who has a double right is that neighbour who is Muslim; he enjoys the right of being a Muslim and being a neighbour. The one who enjoys a threefold right is that neighbour who is a Muslim and a blood relative; he has the right of a Muslim, a relative and a neighbour. (Musnad-e-Bazzaar, Majmauz Zawaaid *vol.8 pg.167* Mariful Hadith *vol.6 pg.99* Kanzul Ummaal *vol.9 pg.15*)

That person, whose neighbour is not saved from his evil, can never be a believer and a dweller of Paradise:

Hadhrat Abu Hurairah τ narrates that Nabi ρ said, "He is not a believer, by Allaah he is not a believer, by Allaah he is not a believer!" The companions asked, "Who, O Rasul of Allaah ρ?" (Meaning, who is that wretched person regarding whom Nabi ρ on oath has said, is not a believer?) He said, "That person who is not saved from the evil of his neighbour!" (Bukhari and Muslim)

Hadhrat Abu Hurairah τ narrates that Nabi ρ said, "He whose neighbour is not safe from his evil will not enter Paradise." (Muslim *vol.1 pg.50*)

Description of a woman of paradise and a woman of hell:

Hadhrat Abu Hurairah τ narrates, "A man came to Nabi ρ and mentioned a woman who performs much optional Salaah, fasts excessively, but at the same time she is abusive to her neighbour by

(means of her tongue). Nabi ρ said, '"She is a dweller of hell."' He then mentioned another woman who does not observe excess fast nor does she perform optional Salaah, but she is not harsh to her neighbour, nor does she cause any difficulty to her. Nabi ρ said, '"Such a woman is a dweller of paradise."' (Musnad-e-Ahmed, Musnad-e-Bazzaar, Majmauz Zawaaid *vol.8 pg.171-172*)

Commentary:

To cause harm to anyone in general is forbidden, though one should ensure not to cause any harm to his neighbour as the consequences are great. Nabi ρ in this Hadith informs us of a woman, who performs optional forms of worship, but due to her causing harm to her neighbour by means of the tongue, all her good deeds were destroyed and she is destined to hell. On the contrary, we are informed by Nabi ρ that a woman who did not perform much optional form of worship, but never caused any harm to anyone, will go to paradise.

A warning for the person who peeps into his neighbour's home:

Hadhrat Abu Hurairah τ narrates that Nabi ρ said, "That person who peeps into his neighbour's house, and sees his (neighbour's) private part or sees the hair or any part of the body of his (neighbour's) wife (makes it) necessary for Allaah to enter him into hell." (Tabrani, Majmauz Zawaaid *vol.8 pg.173*)

A warning for the one who commits adultery with the wife of the neighbour or steals from his (the neighbour's) home:

Hadhrat Miqdaad Ibn Aswad τ reports that Nabi ρ once asked his companions, "What do you say about adultery?" They replied, "It is forbidden, Allaah and His Rasul ρ have made it forbidden, therefore

it is forbidden till the Day of Judgment.” Nabi ρ then said, “The sin of committing adultery with 10 women is less than committing adultery with the wife of ones neighbour!” Nabi ρ then asked, “What do you have to say about theft?” they replied, “It has been made forbidden by Allaah and his Rasul ρ, therefore it is forbidden.” Nabi ρ then said, “The sin of stealing from 10 homes is less than stealing from the home of ones neighbour!” (Majmauz Zawaaid *vol.8 pg.171*)

Commentary:

Nabi ρ has mentioned the severity of the sin of committing adultery with the wife of ones neighbour by saying, that it is such a great sin, had a person committed adultery with any other ten women, it would not have been as great a sin. In other words, committing adultery with the wife of the neighbour is worse than committing adultery with ten other women. (It is clear, that just as committing adultery with the neighbour’s wife is a great sin, the sin of committing adultery with his sister, daughter, daughter-in-law or mother is just as great.) In a similar manner the sin that a person will receive for stealing from 10 homes is not as severe as the sin of stealing from the neighbour’s home. Just as these sins are greater, the punishment in the hereafter will be more severe, and this is besides the punishment that a person will get in this world. The punishment that Allaah has stipulated for adultery in this world is that a person will either be lashed or stoned to death, and the hand of the thief will be cut off. This is the punishment of the world and the punishment in the hereafter will be 10 times more, as the sin of doing wrong to the neighbour is tenfold greater. (Al-Adabul Mufrad *pg.124*)

Not assisting a poor neighbour is a means of deprivation of paradise:

Hadhrat Anas Ibn Maalik τ narrates that a man came to Rasulullaah ρ and said, “O the Rasul of Allaah ρ, please provide me with clothing.” Nabi ρ turned away from him. He (the man) repeated his request

saying, “O the messenger of Allaah ρ, please provide me with clothing.” Nabi ρ then said, “Don’t you have a neighbour (who is better off) and can spare two pieces of cloth?” The man said, “Sure, I have more than one such neighbour.” Nabi ρ then said, “Allaah will never unite you and him in paradise!” (Meaning, that Allaah will not grant paradise to such a person who has a neighbour who needs clothes, and he does not provide him with the same, although he has the means to do so. The same applies to any other need that the neighbour may have, and he does not assist him in his need.) (Tabrani, Majmauz Zawaaid *vol.8 pg.171*)

Giving due consideration to the education and nurturing of the neighbour is also his right:

Alqamah Ibn Abdurrahman Ibn Abzaa narrates from his father Abdurrahman, who narrates from (Alqama’s) grandfather; he says that Nabi ρ said, “What is wrong with those people (who have the knowledge and understanding of Deen?) They do not make an effort to create an awareness or teach their neighbours (who are uneducated) as far as Deen, nor do they advice them, nor do they command them with good or prevent them from evil. And what is wrong with those people (who are uneducated?) They do not bother learning and understanding Deen from their neighbours, nor do they seek advice from them! I swear by Allaah, it is incumbent upon those (who have knowledge of Deen) to make an effort to create awareness and educate their neighbours as far as Deen is concerned. (It is also their duty) to rectify them by advising them and (it is also their duty) to impress upon them the importance of doing good and forbid them from evil. Similarly, it is incumbent upon those who are uneducated, that they go to their neighbours seeking the understanding and knowledge of Deen. (They should also) seek advice from them, or else I will punish (both groups) in this very world. (Ibn Raahwayh)

We understand from this Hadith that Nabi ρ has made the learned ones of every place responsible for the Deeni education of those who

are not learned, and that they should continuously convey (the message of Deen) and advice them. Similarly it is the responsibility of the uneducated to seek knowledge from those who are learned and also maintain a link with them for the benefit of their (the uneducated ones) reformation.

Had we been practicing on the guidance of Nabi ρ given here, there would not have been a single category of the Ummat who is unaware of the Deen of Allaah and none would have been detached from Allaah and his Rasul ρ in the manner which we find majority of the Ummat today.

Undoubtedly the greatest reformation and achievement would be to once again bring alive and establish this informal way of learning and teaching which we are informed of in this Hadith. He who is given the ability to do this is most fortunate. (Kanzul Ummaal *vol.9 pg.58* Mariful Hadith *vol.6 pg.103*)

Rights of the neighbour:

Mujaahid τ narrates that a goat was slaughtered at the home of Abdullaah Ibn Amar τ. When Hadhrat Abdullaah Ibn Amar τ returned, he asked, "Did you people send some of the meat to our Jewish neighbour? Did you people send some of the meat to our Jewish neighbour?" (He repeated the question twice.) He then said,

"I have heard Nabi ρ say, '"Jibraeel υ continuously advised me, emphasizing the importance of (being kind) to the neighbour, until I was convinced that he would bring revelation to the effect that the neighbour will share in the inheritance.'" (Thirmizi *vol.2 p.16*)

Commentary:

The objective of this narration is to emphasize the importance of protecting the rights of the neighbour. The word neighbour is all

encompassing of, Muslim, non-Muslim, pious, sinner, friend, enemy, one living in a village, and one living in the city, relative, non-relative. It is imperative that we fulfill the rights of all neighbours according to their status and rank.

Should a neighbour cause difficulty to us we should patiently bare it, and in no way cause difficulty to the neighbour. In fact we should assist our neighbour as far as possible at the time of difficulty and hardship. We should not throw any dirt in front of the home of the neighbour. We should show affection to the children of our neighbours. If we are unable to show any kindness, the least we should do is not cause any difficulty to them.

Gifting a Jewish neighbour with meat:

Shaikhul Islaam Hadhrat Moulana Mufti Muhammed Taqi Uthmani d.b narrates the incident of Abdullaah Ibn Amar τ thus;

Hadhrat Mujaahid τ was one of the special students of Abdullaah Ibn Amar τ. He says, "I was once sitting with him (Abdullaah Ibn Amar τ). His slave was skinning a goat nearby. Hadhrat Abdullaah Ibn Amar τ addressed this slave saying, '"O young boy, when you are done skinning the goat, first send some of the meat to our Jewish neighbour.'" Someone sitting close by was astonished, and exclaimed, '"May Allaah reform you! Do you send meat to a Jew?'"
He was astounded by the fact that he gifts meat to a Jew who is the enemy of Allaah. This action needs reformation. Hadhrat Abdullaah τ responded to him saying, '"Nabi ρ used to repeatedly advice us regarding being kind to the neighbour, that we began to fear that soon he would include them amongst our inheritors."' (Ibn Abi Shaibah)

Being kind to the neighbour:

By virtue of this Hadith Abdullaah Ibn Amar τ has informed us that the teachings of Nabi ρ regarding being kind to the neighbour has no link to belief or non-belief, therefore irrespective of the fact that the neighbour may be a non-believer, he has to be treated kindly by virtue of being a neighbour. Hate his act of disbelief, hate his sinful ways, but show kindness to him as this in actual fact is an invitation for him. When kindness is shown to him, and he is treated with good character, it is quite likely that Allaah will put Imaan into his heart.

One of the reasons for the spread of Islaam in the first era in reality is the good character which was displayed by the Muslims. Therefore, if the neighbour is a non-believer, hate his act of disbelief and evil ways, and never get too close to him, but as far as his rights as a neighbour is concerned, it is incumbent upon us to fulfill them. So long as he is a neighbour we should fulfill his rights as a neighbour. (Islaahi Khutbaat *vol.12 pg.60/61*)

An amazing incident:

Moulana Wali Razi Sahib writes under one of his awe inspiring subjects:

I write with reference of my heart, that today I very vividly remember a king with no crown, whom I had seen with my very own eyes, and heard with my very own ears. This was none other than the Ustaad of my honorable father, (Mufti Muhammed Shafi Sahib) Moulana Asghar Hussein Shah (R.A.) who was known as “Hadhrat Mia Sahib” and was a person of great piety and super natural fetes. There used to be a Masjid at a slight distance from Hadhrat Mia Sahib’s house, where he used to perform his Salaah. My father says that there was a large house with doors which were decorated on route to this Masjid. Every evening when Hadhrat Mia sahib would pass by this particular house, he would remove his shoes. My father found this strange, and wondered what the reason was for this. Initially he could not muster the courage to ask, but after some time he one day saw the opportunity and questioned Hadhrat as to who

lived in that home, and why did he remove his shoes whenever he passed by it? At first Hadhrat Mia said, "Of what use is it to ask?" Shortly after he said, "A woman who is a prostitute by trade lives in this home. She has now lost her vigor. In her younger days there used to be a crowd here everyday and there was much movement around here. Now this poor lady beautifies herself daily and awaits the arrival of someone. Therefore, I figured that in the evenings when people walk pass, she probably hears their footsteps and becomes hopeful that it is a client, when these footsteps fade, all her hopes are shattered. **I therefore thought, why should we be the cause of her developing forbidden hopes and then be the cause of shattering those very hopes? After all she is also our neighbour! It is incorrect that difficulty reaches her from our part.**

"Let us ponder for a while. How far don't the friends of Allaah see? Everyone has read the rights of the neighbour, but it is only the lot of those endowed with hearts to take into consideration the rights of the neighbour so delicately. Allaah does not bless this understanding and far sightedness without the heart being cleansed and tuned."

The lives of these friends of Allaah have been truly portrayed in the following words;

I lived all my life taking every precaution to ensure,
This nest should never become a target on a branch.

Just for the sake of a birds nest:

After Hadhrat Amar Ibn Aas τ and his companions conquered the outlying cities of Egypt, they surrounded and laid siege on an army fort. Since this siege lasted six months, they had a tent erected. Hadhrat Moulana Mufti Muhammed Taqi Uthmani Sahib writes in his book of travels, "Jahaan deedaa" regarding this tent;

While laying siege on this fort, Hadhrat Amar Ibn Aas τ had a huge tent erected. When he intended advancing, he decided to remove the

tent and take it with. When they began removing the tent, they noticed that a pigeon had laid eggs at the top end of the tent, and she was sitting on these eggs. By uprooting the tent the eggs would have been destroyed, therefore, **Hadhrat Amar Ibn Aas τ said, "This pigeon has taken refuge in our tent. Do not uproot the tent until such time that the eggs hatch and the little nestlings are able to fly!** The tent was therefore left erect. Hadhrat Amar Ibn Aas τ appointed a few people to remain behind and he himself continued towards Alexander." (Jahaan deedaa *pg.141*)

These people never caused pain to the heart of birds and insignificant animals, where would they ever hurt the heart of a human, a Muslim, or their neighbour? These were those who really had the interest and well-being of people at heart. It is sad to note that these days that this type of care and concern is slowly taking leave of our lives.

Seeking refuge in Allaah from an evil neighbour:

Hadhrat Abu Hurairah τ reports that amongst the supplications of Nabi ρ used to be the following, "O Allaah, I seek refuge in you from an evil neighbour in my place of residence, as the neighbour of the jungle keeps changing." (Al-Adabul Mufrad by Bukhari)

Place of residence refers to the place where one has settled. Refuge from an evil neighbour in such a place has been sought, as one has to live with him throughout his life, and there will be no escape from his evil. One would have to bare the difficulties for life, which is really a great affliction. Should one encounter an evil person whilst traveling, this is not as bad, as this is a temporary encounter. Once the journey is over, the evil is over.

Allama Ibn-Uljazri (A.R) in Hisn-e-Haseen quotes the dua on the authority of Sunan Nisaai, Ibn Hibbaan and Haakim in the following words;

"O Allaah! I seek refuge in you from an evil neighbour at my place of residence, as a companion on a journey will soon separate." (Hisn-e-Haseen *pg.455*)
It is clear that life becomes gloomy if one has an evil neighbour. An evil neighbour has an effect on the comfort and peace of his neighbour. We are therefore taught this Duaa in the Hadith. We seek refuge in Allaah from an evil neighbour, aameen.

Seeking refuge in Allaah from an evil day, evil night, evil hour, evil friend and an evil neighbour:

Tabrani narrates on the authority of Uqbah Ibn Aamir τ that Nabi ρ used to make the following dua, "O Allaah I seek refuge in you from an evil day, evil night, evil hour, evil friend, and an evil neighbour in my place of permanent residence." (Majmauz Zawaaid *vol.10 pg.147*)

The complaint of a neighbour:

Hadhrat Abu Hurairah τ narrates that a person came to Nabi ρ and said, "O Rasulullaah ρ, I have a neighbour who causes difficulty to me." Nabi ρ said, "Go back home and remove your belongings from your home and place it on the roadside." He did as he was told. People began to gather at that place and asked, "What has happened here?" This person related to them what had transpired. Upon hearing this, they said, "May the curse of Allaah be on him. May Allaah disgrace him." When the neighbour found out, he said, "Return to your home, I swear I will not cause any difficulty to you."

Hadhrat Abu Juhaifa τ narrates that a man complained to Nabi ρ regarding his neighbour. Nabi ρ instructed him to remove his belongings and place it on the roadside so that whenever anyone passes by, they would curse him, (the neighbour). Therefore, whenever anyone passed by, they cursed him. The neighbour then came to Nabi ρ who told him that this was merely the curses of

humans; surely Allaah's curse is much more severe. He then told the one who was harmed that this has sufficed for him to take heed, or he told him something similar in meaning. (Al Adabul Mufrad *pg.134*)
We have been shown a scheme in these two Ahaadith of how to escape the harms of a neighbour, and that is to remove our belongings and place them on the roadside. By doing this, people passing by would notice and thereafter begin to curse the one causing harm, which will in turn make him realize that the harm is not limited to the neighbour, but the effects turn back on him and he will fall in the esteem of people.

The incident of Muhammed Ibn Abdullaah Ibn Salaam and his neighbour who caused him difficulty:

Muhammed Ibn Abdullaah Ibn Salaam narrates that he came to Nabi ρ and complained that his neighbour was causing him difficulty. Nabi ρ enjoined him to be patient. He says that after sometime he once again reported to Nabi ρ and complained that the neighbour caused him difficulty. Once again Nabi ρ enjoined him to be patient. He says that for the time he complained and said that now the neighbour has straitened him **Nabi ρ instructed him to remove his belongings on to the roadside, and whenever anyone would pass by he should let them know that his neighbour is causing him difficulty.** In this way the passersby would then curse him. Nabi ρ then said, "He who believes in Allaah and the Day of Judgment should be kind towards his neighbour. He who believes in Allaah and the Day of Judgment should be kind towards his guest. He who believes in Allaah and the Day of Judgment should speak good or remain silent. (Kanzul Ummaal *vol.9 pg.183-184*)

The repercussions of compelling a neighbour to leave his home:

Hadhrat Thouban τ who was one of the special attendants of Nabi ρ used to say, those two persons who break off ties from one another

exceeding three days, thereafter one of them passes away, (sometimes both pass away in this condition of not having ties with one another,) both are doomed to destruction. He would also say, that person who oppresses his neighbour or exceeds the limit with his neighbour, so much so that the neighbour is compelled to move, shall also be doomed to destruction. In other words he will be punished in the hereafter. (Al-Adabul Mufrad *pg.137*)

Besides mention of the eminent doom for one who cuts off ties, punishment for the person who causes difficulty to his neighbour to such an extent that the neighbour is forced to leave his home has also been mentioned in this Hadith.

It should clearly be borne in mind, that just as one can cause harm by means of the hand, certain actions and movements of a person can also cause much harm. For instance, a person lives in a double storey building, or a building which has many levels where many people live on different levels. Now a person on the upper level moves about making noise that disturbs those living on the lower level, or a person while ascending or descending the stairs, makes unnecessary noises which disturbs the sleep of every home he passes, or a person plays the radio or television so loud, that he disturbs the worship and peace of the neighbours, so much so that these neighbours are compelled to leave their homes, all those who cause such harm will certainly be punished in the hereafter. It should also be remembered that since this has to do with the rights of the bondsman of Allaah, Allaah will not pardon the perpetrator until his servants pardon him.

Who really is a destitute?

We should always keep in mind the Hadith, the meaning and understanding of which is, once Nabi ρ asked his companions as to who was a destitute? The companions replied that a destitute is he who has no wealth. Upon which Nabi ρ thereafter said that such a person in reality is not a destitute, but a destitute is he who will appear before Allaah with mountains of good deeds to his name. He

would have performed Salaah, fasted, done a lot of *Zikr*, learned and propagated Deen, served Deen to a great extent, performed many Hajj and Umrah, in short, his scale of good deeds will have many good deeds in it, but at the time of his appearance before Allaah, all those who had rights upon him, and he had not fulfilled their rights, will arise, some of whom he may have sworn at, some whom he may have back chatted about, some of whom he may beaten, some of whom he may have hurt the feelings of, some of whom he may caused some form of difficulty, some of whom he may have usurped the wealth of, some whose integrity he may have attacked, in this way all those who had any rights (which were not fulfilled) will beseech Allaah! We have such and such right over him. We have this right upon him. So on and so forth. Remember in the hereafter the currencies of this world will have no value. There the currency will be that of a person's deeds. The rights which were not fulfilled will now be repaid by virtue of deeds. That is why Allaah will then distribute his good deeds between those who had outstanding rights over him. There will come upon him such a time when this mountain of good deeds will become exhausted, but there will still remain those whose rights have not yet been repaid. The next step would be that the evil of those who had rights upon him will be laden on him as a result of which he will be flung into Jahannam. At the time of his arrival he was convinced of entrance into Jannat, but here he sees himself going towards Jahannam. Nabi ρ then said that this person in reality is a destitute.

Therefore the rights of the servants of Allaah are something which we should be fearful with regards to. These are unpardonable by means of repentance and seeking forgiveness from Allaah alone, rather the one whom these rights are owed to will have to pardon a person.

Forty homes (in every direction) are termed as neighbours:

One should also bear in mind that not only the houses to the left and right are classified as neighbours, but forty houses to the right, forty to the left, forty behind and forty in front are all classified as neighbours!

Therefore, we find that Imam Bukhari (R.A.) in his writing, Al-Adabul Mufrad has quoted the saying of Hadhrat Hasan τ when asked as to who falls within the classification of a neighbour? He said, “Forty houses to the front, forty to the back, forty to the right and forty to the left.”

Nevertheless, as far as showing kindness and gifting the neighbour is concerned, one should take into consideration the closest neighbours first. One should not begin with the distant neighbours in giving gifts etc. rather; the method which should be adopted is that those closest should be given first preference over those at a distance. Though harm and difficulty should not reach anybody from our part as the consequences of this is very severe.

The one whose door is closest should be given preference as far as gifts are concerned:

Hadhrat Ayesha ψ once asked Rasulullaah ρ, “I have two neighbours, who should I send gifts to (first)?” Nabi ρ said, “To the one whose door is closest to yours.” (Bukhari *vol.2 pg.890*)

Commentary:

Just as that relative who is most closely related to us is given preference over the other relatives in as far as importance of showing kindness and maintaining family ties are concerned, that neighbour whose door is closest to us will be given preference over the other neighbours in as far as gifts and that are concerned. We should send more gifts and be more kind to the closest neighbour.

It is sad to note that these days, showing kindness to family, living harmoniously with them, assisting them financially, joining ties with them, no longer exists, leave alone behaving this way towards neighbours! This in reality is a big crevice in our Imaan. A believer is he who endeavors to even keep his enemy happy!

Sheikh S’adi (R.A.) says in one of his couplets; (the translation of which is)

“We have heard the incidents of the friends of Allaah. They would not tolerate hurting the heart of their enemies! How have you now reached this level that you fight and differ with your friends?”

The condition of the Sahaba τ was such that even if one of them himself was in dire need, the need of his companion was given preference over his personal need.

Hadhrat Abdullaah Ibn Umar τ narrates that a Sahabi was gifted with a sheep head. He thought that a certain companion of mind is in greater need of it than me, he is also a tribesman, his family is also in need of it, and therefore I should send it to him. He in turn felt the same about a third person and made it over to him. In short, the sheep head went to seven homes and finally came back to the first Sahabi τ.

A strange incident regarding giving preference and showing kindness to others:

Giving preference to others over oneself and sharing in the grief and pain of others reserves a remarkable spot in the teaching and the Muslim way of life. For the existence of an Islaamic way of life this quality plays an essential role. In the annals of Islaamic history, many strange incidents in this regard have been recorded. One such incident has been recorded by Khateeb Baghdaadi (R.A.) in his book,

"The history of Baghdad." Under thy discussion of Imam Waaqidi (R.A.) he rights;

Waaqidi narrates that once I encountered serious financial difficulties. I reached the state of extreme poverty. I was told by family members that the occasion of Eid was soon arriving. The elders of the home would be able to spend an Eid of poverty, but what about the children? Hearing this, I went to one of my friend who was a businessman. Upon seeing me, he immediately realized my need, and placed 1200 dirhams into a bag and handed it to me. I returned home, and had barely sat down, when a Hashemite friend of mine who was also stricken with poverty, came to me for a loan. I consulted my wife and told her as to what had happened. She asked me how much I had intended giving him. I said that I intended dividing it in half so that the work of both can be done. She chided me saying, that when you went to an ordinary person, he gave you 1200 dirhams, now you want to give someone half of it only! You should give him the entire bag! I therefore made over the bag without even opening it. This friend of mine went home with the bag. By and by my businessman friend came to his door seeking a loan from him due to poverty! My Hashemite friend made over the very same bag. Looking at it he recognized it to be his very own bag! He left it with my Hashemite friend and came to me to investigate the matter. I narrated the entire incident to him. In reality this was the only wealth in his possession and he had made it over to me, therefore he went to our Hashemite friend seeking a loan. When the Hashemite wanted to hand the bag over to him, the secret was revealed.

When this strange incident reached the ears of the ruler Yahya Bin Khalid, he came with 10 000 dirhams saying, "2000 dirhams are for you, 2000 for your businessman friend, 2000 for the Hashemite friend and 4000 for your wife as she was the most kind, therefore she is most deserving!" (Taareekh-e- Baghdad *vol.3 pg.2*)

Allaah says, "They prefer others over themselves, even though poverty became their lot!"

These were those who were living examples of Islaamic character. Non-Muslims would spur themselves onto accepting Islaam by seeing such display of character. Today we could possibly never find such examples even after searching!

No Muslim woman should look down at the gift sent by her neighbour:

Hadhrat Abu Hurairah τ narrates that Nabi ρ told the women, "None of you women should consider insignificant the gift of a neighbour, even if it be a hoof of a goat!" (Bukhari *vol.2 pg.889*)

Commentary:

The objective here is that the habit of exchanging gifts should be perpetual, whatever little is available should be presented. It should not be that the giver thinks that this little thing is too insignificant to give and the taker should not feel that, what am I to do with such a little think? The example of a hoof has been given for us to understand that there is no need to feel uncomfortable if the item is (outwardly) insignificant. The giver and taker should look at the heart with which it is given and taken. Do not look at the size of the gift; look at the love with which it is given. Exchanging of gifts is a noble quality.

It is narrated in the Hadith that the exchanging of gifts will remove malice from the hearts.

The intention of giving and taking should be to please Allaah. The intention should never be that the deed will be reciprocated. In other words, an attitude of I give, you give, should not be adopted. Neither should there be a desire even of a return of the favor. Rewards should be hoped for from Allaah alone. Such type of gifting will soon create love and remove malice. If the intention is "I give, you give" and

thereafter this does not happen, jealousy and malice will certainly develop.

When will we acquire the love of Allaah and his Rasul ρ?

Hadhrat Abdur-Rahman bin Abi Quraad τ narrates that Nabi ρ once performed ablution (wudhu). The Sahaba τ began to pass the used water of Nabi ρ over their bodies. Nabi ρ asked them as to why were they doing this. They said that it was due to their love for Allaah and his Rasul ρ. Nabi ρ then said to them that, that person who desires to love Allaah and His Rasul ρ or desires that Allaah and His Rasul ρ love him, should speak the truth whenever he speaks, return a trust when he is entrusted with it, and show kindness to the one who is his neighbour. (Mishkat *pg.424*)

Commentary:

The implication of this Hadith is that, to claim the love of Allaah and His Rasul ρ is not proven through such actions which appeal and appease the *nafs,* but the proof of love for Allaah and His Rasul ρ is in fulfilling the commands of Allaah and His Rasul ρ and abstaining from those things which they have prohibited us from. Especially those laws have to be practiced upon which deal with the rights of others and social dealings with others, and more especially those rights and social dealings which are commonly encountered. Like speaking the truth, returning a trust and being kind towards the neighbours. These are such qualities by virtue of which the love of Allaah and His Rasul ρ could be earned.

Therefore, anyone who claims the love of Allaah and His Rasul ρ, his speech, actions and deeds should be a proof of his claim by him adhering to them just as he adheres to the Faraaidh and Waajibaat. He should always do those things which please Allaah and not even go close to those things which he has prohibited us from.

It is this very lesson which the famous doyen Raabiya Basriya (R.A.) beautifully explained in the following couplets;

You disobey Allaah and at the same time claim to love Him,
I swear by my life this is something we cannot fathom.
Were your love for Him, a true one, you would have obeyed Him,
For a lover is always obedient to his Beloved.

The virtue of a good neighbour and good friend:

Hadhrat Abdullaah Ibn Amar τ reports that Nabi ρ said, "(In the eyes of Allaah) the best friend is he who is kind to his friend, and (in the eyes of Allaah) the best of neighbours is he who is kind towards his neighbours." (Mishkat *pg.424*)

Commentary:

The meaning of this is, that person who is good to his friends and neighbours all the time, is not only considered as good amongst his friends and neighbours, but Allaah also rewards him abundantly.

Regard the tongues of the creation as the kettle drums of the creator:

Hadhrat Ibn Masood τ says that a man came to Nabi ρ and asked, "O Rasul of Allaah ρ, how would I know if I have done good or I have done evil?" (In other words, such actions which are not clearly indicated as good or bad by Shariah, how would I know that by doing them I am counted amongst the righteous or evil doers?) Nabi ρ replied saying, "When you find (after having done something,) you hear your neighbour saying that you have done good, then know that you have done good, and if you hear your neighbour say that you have done evil, then know that you have done evil." **(In other**

words, testimony to your good or evil, are the words of your neighbour.)

Commentary:

The meaning of, "when you hear your neighbour," implies all your neighbours, since two or three could agree on something as wrong, but for all or many to agree on something as wrong is not really possible. Though, it should be remembered that, Sheikh Abdul Haqq Dehlawi (R.A.) had clearly stated that the Hadith refers to such a situation where the neighbours are on the truth and are of just character and they themselves are able to differentiate between good and bad. Similarly they should not be too affectionate or close to their neighbour, nor should they be of those who have hatred or enmity for their neighbour.

This Hadith is supportive of Hadhrat Ali's τ saying, "The tongues of the creation are the pens of the creator!" This has also been translated into an Urdu saying which means, "The tongues of the creation are the kettle drums of the creator!"

A poet has very beautifully said,

Regard that as evil, which the aalim regards as evil,
Regard the tongues of the creation as the kettle drums of the creator!
(Mazaahir-e-Haqq *vol.4 pg.544*)

Who is a complete and perfect Muslim?

Hadhrat Ibn Masood τ narrates that Nabi ρ said, "Allaah has distributed between you character, just as he has distributed between you your sustenance. The fact of the matter is that the material possessions of this world he has given to those whom he loves, (like Suleiman υ and Uthmaan τ etc.) as well as those whom he detests (like Pharaoh and Qaroon etc.) Though, the Deen of Allaah and good

character is only given to his friends. (In short, material wealth, worldly position and status, is given to friends and foes, but the rightful recipients of the bounty of good character are only the friends of Allaah.) Therefore, Allaah loves the one whom he has given Deen to. I swear by that being who holds my life in his hands, no person can be a true Muslim unless his heart and his tongue surrenders (to Allaah) and no person can be a complete or perfect believer unless his neighbour is safe from any type of harm on his part.” (Mishkat *pg.425*)

Commentary:

Islaam of the heart means that the heart should be pure of all baseless believes and views. Islaam of the tongue means that the tongue should be free of all futile talk.

A clearer explanation is that the meaning of the Islaam of the tongue and heart is the attestation and affirmation (of the tongue and heart) which is the foundation of Imaan and by virtue of this and indication **is made that when the inner body and outer body are one, this is proof of perfect Imaan and Islaam.** Since the tongue and heart are the very basis of Deen, these have been specifically mentioned. (Mazaahir-e-Haqq *vol.4 pg.558*)

A pious neighbour is a blessing:

Hadhrat Naf’i bin Abdil-Harith τ narrates that Nabi ρ said, “Amongst the blessings that a man could have are, a pious neighbour, a decent means of conveyance and a house that is spacious enough.” (Majmauz-Zawaaid *vol.8 pg.166*)

Commentary:

Just as a person’s life can become a misery due to an evil neighbour, a person’s life can become a peaceful and blissful one by virtue of a pious neighbour. Really, it is an honor to have a pious neighbour. A

person should thank Allaah for such a bounty. **It has been mentioned in a narration that 100 homes are saved from calamities because of a single pious person in the neighbourhood.** It has also been mentioned that one should seek a neighbour before a house, and a companion before embarking on a journey. This means that a person should take a house where the neighbours are pious, and travel with the pious. (Majmauz-Zawaaid *vol.8 pg.167*)

Many a neighbour will complain in the court of Allaah on the Day of Judgment:

Hadhrat Ibn Umar τ says, "There was a time in our lives when we considered our Muslim brother more worthy of a Dinaar and Dirham, now such a time passes over us that a Dirham and Dinaar has become more beloved to us than our Muslim brother! I have heard Nabi ρ say, '"On the Day of Judgment a person will take his neighbour to task by complaining to Allaah saying, my neighbour shunned me by shutting his door from me and not showing kindness to me.'" Aladabul-Mufrad *pg.127*)

Commentary:

This shows that there was once a time when Muslims had the eagerness to spend their wealth on their fellow Muslim brothers. Be it a relative, non-relative or neighbour, the enthusiasm to spend on all was given prominence. These very fellow Muslims were more beloved than wealth. Now a time has come were the wealth has become more beloved than the Muslim brethren. Neither do we spend on our relatives, non-relatives or neighbours. So much so that we do not assist the neighbour even during the hour of need. The doors are shut of when we see the neighbour. We do not fulfill their needs. On the Day of Judgment many neighbours will grab their fellow neighbours and present themselves in the court of Allaah complaining that he had shut his door of from them not giving them access to him and not taking their needs into due consideration.

Therefore it is imperative that we consider our neighbours. It should not be that we are caught out in the court of Allaah on account of them.

When a person kills his neighbour:

Imam Bukhari (R.A.) has recorded in his book Al-Adabul Mufrad on the authority of Hadhrat Abu Hurairah τ that Nabi ρ said, “Qiyaamah will not take place until such time when a man will kill his neighbour, brother and father.”

Commentary:

We are informed in this Hadith of an era where people in this world will kill their neighbours. A neighbour is a neighbour, but a man will not even spare his brother or father! He will spill their blood also! In our day and age we are already witnessing such occurrences. We only have to wait and see what lies ahead in the future. (Al-Adabul Mufrad *pg.131*)

The first dispute on the Day of Judgment:

Hadhrat Uqbah Bin Aamir τ narrates that Nabi ρ said, “The first disputants on the Day of Judgment (to be heard) will be two neighbours.” (Mishkat *pg.425*)

Commentary:

The meaning of this is after those who are destined to Jahannam have been done with, the first case of negligence as far as rights are concerned to be presented, will be the case of those neighbours who were found wanting in this regard. Where they had caused harm to one another and not fulfilled the due rights on the next etc.

A strange incident of a pious man:

Imam Ghazaali (R.A.) has written in his famous “Ihyaa-ul-Uloom” of a man who complained that rats had infested his home. Someone suggested he keep a cat. He said that he feared if he kept a cat the rats will be afraid of the cat and go into the neighbours’ home! Why should he be happy with that the neighbour is not happy with and prepare for himself? (Ihyaa-ul-Uloom *pg.307*)

The trouble makers are all but spectators:

Hadhrat Qasim τ narrates that Abu Bakr τ once passed by his son Abdurrahman who was involved in a dispute with his neighbour. He told his son that he should not fight with his neighbour as the neighbour will stay on while the ones (who caused the problem) will leave. (Kanzul-Ummaal *vol.9 pg.183*)

Commentary:

The conditions which prevail on a neighbour and their character differ. Sometimes the children go in and out of the neighbours’ home. The children get involved in fights at times. Sometimes the goat or fowl of a neighbour may come into the yard and thereby cause discomfort. Many men and women are hot-headed and have sharp tongues which for no reason they sometimes use and cause disputes. Then you have the mischief makers and jealous people who whisper all sorts of stories into a person’ ears. Therefore we should be careful of such people. We should think that we have to live in the same precincts as our neighbour, why should we destroy our relationship over trivial matters? Why should we do harm to our neighbour and in the process destroy our worldly life and life in the hereafter? These trouble makers are all but spectators and people who are board. They will just watch and move on.

Very severe warnings have been sounded in the Ahaadith for the one who causes difficulty to the neighbour.

On one occasion Nabi ρ said, "The one who causes difficulty to his neighbour has caused difficulty to me, and the one who causes difficulty to me, causes difficulty to Allaah. The one who fights with his neighbour has fought with me, and the one who fights with me has fought with Allaah." (Kanzul-Ummaal *vol.9 pg.57*)

The virtues for the one who patiently bares the difficulty caused by a neighbour:

Mutrif Ibn Abdullaah τ says that people narrated a Hadith to me from Abu Zhar τ. I had this desire to meet him; (so that I could hear it directly from him.) by and by I met him. I said, "O Abu Zhar τ, people have narrated a Hadith to me from you. I desired to meet you; (so that I could hear it directly from you.)" He said, "May Allaah bless your father, you have now met me. Tell me (which Hadith is it?)" I said, "I have been informed of the Hadith wherein Nabi ρ says that Allaah loves three people and abhors three people." Abu Zhar τ said, "I cannot even conceive the thought of attributing a lie to Nabi ρ." I then asked, "Who are these three people whom Allaah loves?" He said, "One is that person who fights bravely with steadfastness in the path of Allaah hoping for its reward and is finally martyred. You will find mention of this person in the Noble Quraan itself." He then read the verse wherein Allaah says, "Allaah loves those who stand together like a fortified fortress and fight in the path of Allaah." I then asked, "Who is the second person?" He said, "The second is that person who has an evil neighbour who continuously causes him difficulty, but he patiently perseveres until such time that Allaah gives another life (by reforming his neighbour) or until he passes away." He then went on to mention other Ahaadith also. (Majmauz-Zawaaid *vol.8 pg.174*)

Commentary:

We learn from this Hadith that the one, who patiently bares the difficulties caused by his neighbour by not retaliating or swearing at him in any way, will become beloved in the eyes of Allaah. Not only will Allaah love him, but on the Day of Judgment Allaah will reward the patient ones without any record.

Now those who cause difficulty should think well as to who they are really harming. They are actually harming themselves and destroying their Aakhirat (hereafter.)

You and your neighbour:

Hadhrat Suhail Tasturi (R.A.) was a great luminary in the Islaamic world. It has been many years since his demise, yet every spec of radiance from his life can still be seen. A fire worshipper lived right beside the wall of Hadhrat. Hadhrat made every attempt to show kindness to this fire worshipper, but in return all he got was deep rooted hatred. To express this hatred the fire worshipper would every night remove his filth and sanitation, and throw it over into Hadhrat Suhails' house.

Now obviously being a human being Hadhrat naturally felt discomfort, but he exercised patience. He would retaliate with silence and patience, and clean the filth with his very own hands. This carried on for some time. The fire worshipper kept throwing his filth, and Hadhrat kept cleaning it up. During this time, Hadhrat would very discretely try to draw the fire worshippers' attention to this, but he did not desist from his action. Hadhrat bore this and replied with nothing but patience and silence. The family of Hadhrat was much more perturbed by this and would sometimes want to take revenge, but Hadhrat would encourage them to be patient. He would ensure to remove the filth the very same night so that his family does not see it and become irritated.

Fate would have it that Hadhrat fell ill and had no hope of recovery. Hadhrat sent for his neighbour and secretly spoke to him. He addressed him thus, “Brother, the filth which you had been depositing over into my home every night was duly cleaned up by me while I was in good health. Now I am in the condition which you are seeing me in. In the name of the Almighty, please desist from this as after me my family may not tolerate such behavior on your part. I fear that they may cause grievous harm to you.”
The fire worshipper was so taken aback by the approach of Hadhrat that he became ashamed of himself and hung his head in shame saying, “Please forgive me for the sake of Almighty. I have definitely caused much harm to you, but you have displayed patience which can only be the example of the power of Islaam. Forgive me and make me recite the kalimah.” (Sh’oor-e-Hayaat Moulana Muhammed Yusuf Islaahi)

An incident of a person who threw his rubbish into the neighbours’ property:

Hadhrat Moulana Rashid Ahmed Sahib narrates an incident dealing with his neighbour:

The person living on the upper floor to the rear of the Daarul-Ifta used to dispose of his rubbish into the Daarul-Ifta on a daily basis. He was told on many occasions to desist from doing so, but to no avail. Some person once suggested that they would get a truck load of bricks and rain it on him; perhaps his brain will come right! I told them that this was not appropriate. I then sent a message to the neighbour saying that I wished to meet him, but I am unaware at what time he would be at home, and when does he have free time. Hearing this message of mine, he presented himself before me. I told him that I wished to send him some gift, but thought that I should get to know him first. He in turn said that it was rather his duty to send me gifts and he was deprived of not having done so yet. I assured him, pointing to the heap of rubbish, that gifts have been coming in full measure from his side and it is for the very same reason I

deemed it necessary to return the compliments! After all, the return for kindness can only be kindness! When so many gifts keep coming from you, it is only fair that I give you something also. He was ashamed and from that day on, the rubbish stopped.

A short list of the rights of the neighbour:

Imam Ghazaali (R.A.) has mentioned the rights of the neighbour in brief in his Ihyaa-ul-Uloom which we have reproduced here:

1. We should be first to greet our neighbour.
2. We should not lengthen our conversations with him.
3. We should not ask too much about his personal affairs.
4. We should visit him when he is sick.
5. Console him at the time of a calamity and never leave his side.
6. Congratulate him on any good that befalls him and express our happiness for him also.
7. Over look his mistakes.
8. Do not peep into his house from any vantage point.
9. Do not inconvenience him by putting rafters over the wall or positioning the gutters in a way that the water flows into his property or by dumping the sand from the courtyard into his yard.
10. Do not block the entrance/pathway to his home.
11. Do not be too inquisitive as to what he takes into his home.
12. Do not expose any fault of his that we become aware of.
13. Should any calamity befall him, be the first to assist him.
14. Never be negligent of guarding his home in his absence.
15. Do not listen to any evil spoken about him.
16. Lower your gaze in the presence of his wife. (Do not look at her.)
17. Do not stare at his female servant (Domestic worker.)
18. Speak to his children in a compassionate manner.

19. Educate him regarding those things beneficial of this world and matters regarding Deen which he is unaware of.
20. Besides these rights, all those rights due to Muslims in general should be taken into consideration. (In such a situation the neighbour will have two types of rights, one of a neighbour and one of a Muslim.) (Ihyaa-ul-Uloom)

The neighbour:

The following discourse has been extracted from Mufti Muhammed Taqi Uthmani’s d.b discussion titled, “Zikr wa Fikr.”

Abu Hamza Sukkari (R.A.) was a narrator of Ahaadith. Sukkar in the Arabic language means sugar. Those who have written regarding him say that he was called Sukkari because his talks, tone and manner of speech were sweet and heart captivating. When he would speak people would go into a state of ecstasy. He resided in one of the suburbs of Baghdad. After some time he intended selling his house and moving to some other place. In fact the deal was almost through with the buyer when the people residing in his area found out about his intention to move. The residence of his area formed a delegation which came to him pleading with him not to leave the suburb. When Abu Hamza Sukkari (R.A.) had explained himself as to why he intended moving, the people unanimously made an offer to him that they would give him a gift (in the form of money) to the value of his house on condition that he does not move. When he saw the sincerity of the people of his area, he protracted his decision of moving.

Abu Hamza’s acceptance may have been partially his magical personality, but the actual reason for his acceptance was his practical display of the fulfillment of the rights of the neighbour according to the Islaamic teachings. The Quran is emphatic as regards the rights of the neighbour, and the Ahaadith are full of explanations regarding their rights. So much so, that on one occasion Nabi ρ said that Jibraeel υ stressed the importance of the fulfillment of the rights of the neighbour to such an extent that I thought soon (revelation will

be sent to the effect that) the neighbour should receive a share in the inheritance.

The society which was established in the light of the teachings of the Quran and Sunnat was one where the neighbour was regarded as a close relative. People living in the same neighbourhood not only shared in the happiness and difficulty of the neighbour, but took pleasure in giving preference to the neighbour above themselves.

In 1963 when I travelled to Saudi Arabia, a person residing there narrated a personal experience of his. He says, I went into the bazaar to purchase material. Upon entering a certain shop, the shopkeeper took pleasure in showing me many different types of material displaying the best of character. In the end I had liked a certain material. The shopkeeper told me the price and I asked him to cut an ex amount of yards for me. He stood for a while contemplating then asked me, “Do you fancy this material?” I said, “Yes.” He asked, “The price in your opinion is also correct? I said, “Yes.” He then said, “Well in that case, go to my neighbours shop and you will find the same material at the same price. You may buy it from him.” I was astonished and asked him as to why I should buy it from his neighbour as I had concluded the deal with him. He told me that I do not have to get involved in that as the material which I like is available at the same price by his neighbour, so I should just go and buy it from there. I said that I would first like to know the reason. “Perhaps the shop is yours?” I asked. He said, “No, it is not mine.” Now I became stubborn and insisted on an explanation or else I would not buy it from there. In the end he very reluctantly said, “You are unnecessarily delaying the matter. The reality of the matter is that since this morning many customers have come into my shop and made purchases. In my estimation I have made sufficient transactions to see to my days needs. On the other hand I see that my neighbour is sitting there since morning without having sold anything. I desired that he should also do some business. By you going there it would be of good to him. What problem do you have with that?”

This is an incident of what was left of the radiance from the true Islaamic society of the past. Where happiness and success were not just the acquisition of wealth, but it was the contentment and peace of the heart which was acquired through sharing in the loss and happiness of a Muslim brother or sister or seeing a smile in their face!
When the Quran mentions that, “The Ansaar of Madina would give preference to others even though poverty be their lot” this in reality is meant to serve as an example for the Muslims to emulate. This is an encouragement for the Muslims. The act of giving preference to others is meritorious, irrespective of who has been given preference, but the neighbour is the most worthy of being given preference therefore the Quran and Sunnah emphatically encourage it.

The modern urban way of life has not only stripped us of values, but has also portrayed the neighbour in a very negative light. First of all those living in mansions are slowly but surely forgetting the meaning of a neighbour. **Many a times, people are living beside one another for a long time, yet they do not know each other.** Where some importance of a neighbour is realized, it is generally such a neighbour who is of equal or similar financial and worldly status. Therefore a person living in a mansion will consider another who is living in a mansion to be his neighbour. Should there be anyone living in a small dwelling or house nearby then he is generally not considered a neighbour and is not given the due rights of a neighbour. Very seldom do we see a person living in a mansion showing concern for his neighbour who lives in a little house, visiting him when he is sick, or just paying him a general visit, whereas such a neighbour is more deserving of being given preference and shown love.

The senior most mufti of Darul-Uloom Deoband, Moulana Mufti Azizur-Rahman was a man of great knowledge and high status as far as Deen was concerned. He was even outstanding in status within family circles. Yet, every day before going to the Darul-Uloom to fulfill his necessary obligations, he would visit the widows and those

women who had no support living in insignificant little homes asking them if they required anything from the market place. In many instances he would write the lists of these women and personally purchase these items from the market place and personally deliver it to them. Sometimes a woman would tell him, “Mufti Sahib you have brought the wrong item. I had asked for such and such item, not this.” Or, “You have brought the incorrect amount of items.” Mufti Sahib would, with a smiling face say, “Please forgive me dear lady, and I will exchange it for you.” In this way, no one knows how many a broken hearts dua did he gather and by bringing alive their hearts through his service, he fulfilled his daily tasks.

Today almost everyone in spite of being engulfed in all forms of worldly comfort experiences a strange kind of restlessness and has hearts which are lonely.

Like Nazar Amrohi says it;

There is no confusion, though confused I remain,
Wonder stricken, fear in every breath, fear in every heart beat I remain.

One of the leading factors for this state of restlessness and loneliness is that we have understood the acquisition of wealth to be the primary objective of life. In chasing after this wealth we have not thought of preparing for the future. We have in the process deprived ourselves of a spiritual contentment which could have been acquired by serving a brother or sister of ours or sacrificing something for them. This contentment is a cash reward for the one who brings his life in conformity to the commands of creator and owner by crushing his impermissible desires in the face of his commandments. Sometimes this contentment of the heart is acquired living in simple homes and eating simple food, whereas if the conditions for this are not fulfilled, this cannot be acquired in mansions or in flashy cars! In such a situation a huge mansion or flashy car will never cure the silent restlessness within!

There is no doubt that the urban life has many commitments, but if we really look into it, we will realize that these commitments are only for purposes of increasing our wealth. Therefore, if we really have concern to acquire the true contentment of the heart, we will have to take a few hours from this committed life to sneak into the lives of those living around us so that we can look for ways to remove their difficulties. By taking out a few moments from this 24 hour committed life, Insha-Allaah we will accomplish such fetes which we would never have accomplished by running around day and night with abundant wealth. (Zikr-wa-Fikr *pg.255-259*)

A pious neighbour is a great blessing:

It has been mentioned in a Hadith that three things have special importance from amongst the good fortune which a Muslim could possess;

1. A spacious enough home.
2. A pious neighbour.
3. A decent mode of transport.

Hadhrat Moulana Mufti Taqi Uthmani says:

The second thing which is an honor and blessing in the lot of a Muslim is a pious neighbour. Should a person have a pious neighbour, he should know that he has a great blessing. Today people have forgotten this to be a bounty. In today’s time of mansions, there is no perception of a neighbour left. **Years would go by without one knowing who lives to the right of him and to who does the house on the left belong!** Whereas, Nabi ρ has said that the rights of the neighbour are so many, that Jibraeel υ kept on emphasizing this until I thought that the neighbour would share in the inheritance. This is the importance of a neighbour.

Where we look at other factors when looking for a house, we should also take due consideration as to who are the people living in that area. If the neighbour is a noble and upright person, consider this a great bounty. The neighbour is someone who we have to come into contact with day and night. His company is unavoidable. **Good company will make one into a good person, while evil company will make one an evil person.** That is why we are told that a pious neighbour is a great bounty. (Reformative discourses *vol.12 pg.41 Urdu*.)

Following is an incident regarding Hadhrat Ayesha ψ:

The neighbour's goat eating a piece of bread:

Hadhrat Ayesha τ narrates an incident of hers as follows, "Once Nabi ρ came to my home. As it was the habit of Nabi ρ to have turns in going to the various consorts, on one day he would go to one and on the next day he would go to the next. On this particular day it was my turn." Normally it is the desire of every wife to serve her husband and cook good food for him. The love which Ayesha τ bore for Nabi ρ is unmatched the world over. She therefore had the desire to present good food to Nabi ρ knowing that it was his turn to come to her home. But, how was she supposed to cook a good meal when whatever they had was spent in the path of Allaah. Hadhrat Ayesha τ goes on to say, "There was some barley in the house which I put into the grinding mill and ground into flour thereafter making a *roti* thinking that when Nabi ρ arrives I will present it before him. As it was the winter season and Nabi ρ was feeling cold, he expressed this to me. I made arrangements for a warm bed on which Nabi ρ immediately fell asleep."

She says, "I was waiting for him to awake so that I could present the *roti* which I had prepared, to him. While in this state of waiting, the neighbour's goat came into the house and took the *roti* which I had prepared with love and eagerness. I watched the goat take it away,

but since Nabi ρ was asleep, I did not want to stop the goat thereby disturbing the sleep of Nabi ρ. The goat took the *roti* and walked out of the house which caused me great grief. After a while Nabi (S.A.W) awoke, and I immediately ran towards the door in the hope of finding the goat."

Not causing difficulty to the neighbour due to a *roti*:

"Seeing me in this state of excitement, Nabi ρ enquired as to what was wrong. I narrated the entire incident how I had prepared the *roti* with great love and here the goat came by and took it causing me grief. **Nabi ρ asked for whatever was left of the *roti* and told me not cause difficulty to my neighbour due to the goat and I should also not say anything harsh to the neighbour regarding her goat taking the *roti* and causing me harm."**

Now look, even on such an occasion Nabi ρ encouraged her not to say anything harsh to the neighbour as it was no fault of the neighbour's. Even if the neighbour was at fault, what's the harm if one *roti* went? One has to live beside the neighbour for good, if anything harsh is said an eternal relationship will be spoilt, and this relationship is more precious than a single *roti*.

How would we ever understand the value of that *roti*?

If we have to ponder for a while, we would realize that we will never understand the value of the *roti* which Ayesha τ had baked.

The reason for this is that Allaah has provided sustenance in abundance for us these days. We have no value whatsoever of *roti*. The loss of one *roti* makes no difference to us. The condition prevalent at that time was that a meager amount of barley was available to make just one *roti*, and the very same *roti* was taken by

the goat. In spite of all this Rasulullaah ρ took care in telling her not to cause any difficulty to the neighbour due to the action of the goat.

The following type of neighbour will not enter paradise:

In a Hadith Nabi ρ has said, “That person will not enter paradise, whose neighbour was unsafe from his evil/harm.” (Kanzul-Ummaal Hadith #*26908*)
In other words one of the prerequisites of entering paradise is that no harm should reach the neighbour from oneself.

In another Hadith Nabi ρ is reported to have said, “Keep the area in front of your homes clean.” (Thirmizi)

There should never be heaps of rubbish surrounding ones’ house which may cause harm to the neighbours and passersby. Some people sweep the dirt from their own homes and deposit it in front of the neighbours’ home. This constitutes causing harm to the neighbour, the result of which is non-entry into paradise. If each person takes care in ensuring the cleanliness of his surroundings, there would remain no need for municipal workers in any town.

An incident regarding an English revert:

Cleanliness is part of Deen as Nabi ρ has informed us so. **These days’ people think that cleanliness has nothing to do with Deen, and it is linked to worldly matters only.**

My respected father, Mufti Muhammed Shafi Sahib (R.A.) narrated an incident of an Englishman who used to reside near the Jami Masjid in Delhi. He reverted to Islaam and used to go to the Masjid for his daily Salaah. Whenever he needed to take an ablution, he would do so at the ablution facility provided in the Masjid. As time went by, he noticed that this facility was becoming dirty. In some places green moss had collected, at other places in the drain mucus

had collected. Somewhere something else had stagnated. He decided that if no one was prepared to clean it, he would clean it by himself. He took a broom/brush and began to clean the drains. Someone seeing him cleaning the drains began to say, “This Englishman has become a Muslim, but his English habits are still deep rooted in his brain!”

In other words cleanliness is the way of the English, and it has no link with the teachings of Deen, Allaah forbid.
Nabi ρ has taught us to even keep the surroundings of our homes clean as this forms part of the rights of the neighbour. (Reformative discourses *vol.12 pg.54-59 Urdu*)

The oppressive use of a loudspeaker system:

An oppressor is not only one who usurps the wealth of another or one who physically abuses a person using his hand, but the definition of oppression in the Arabic language is as follows; “To use anything in any way other than the way it is meant to be used.” Since using something other than where it is meant to be used will definitely cause harm to someone or the other. Therefore, such inappropriate use of an item or thing will fall within the ambit of the definition of oppression. When such use causes harm to another human, this will constitute a major sin. But, alas, our lives are filled with many such types of major sin which we do not even perceive as major sins though.

Amongst the many forms of harm caused to others, one absolutely irritating form of harm is the oppressive use of the loudspeaker. A few days ago, there was a complaint written in a daily English publication, where the complainant said that music was continuously played over a loudspeaker system up until three in the morning disturbing the sleep of those living around the hall. This is not limited to a wedding hall, but we find that wherever any person erects a loudspeaker system he cannot care less that it should be used

within necessity and that he should show mercy to the elderly and weak people living in the area.

Playing music is a separate issue, as this is a double sin. Where a purely Islaamic or cultural event is taking place, it is still impermissible to forcibly make people listen to such events by turning the volume of the loudspeaker high. Yet, it is sad to say that in our society those involved in organizing such religious and cultural events do not take this important order into consideration. Even at such events the loudspeaker could be heard far off. Neither can one sleep peacefully in his home nor can he do any work in solitude. The spreading of the Azaan by means of a loudspeaker is absolutely permissible, but delivering sermons or conducting Zikr and Qiraat events over the loudspeaker has no validity whatsoever. Most of the time we find that on such occasions very few people will gather in the Masjid, who can very easily hear the program without any loudspeaker or with the internal speaker system sufficing, yet the outdoor loudspeaker will be turned on in full force. As a result not a single home in the entire town is left without being affected by it.

I can vividly remember going to Lahore on one occasion. The house where I had stayed had three Masaajid within close proximity to it. It was a Friday. After the Fajr Salaah the loudspeaker systems of all three Masaajid were turned on full blast, and first some discourse began thereafter children began recitals followed by poetry and praises which went on uninterrupted until the time of Jumuah, so much so that one could not hear someone if they spoke into the ear even! All thanks to Allaah that no person was ill in the house where I resided, but I began to think that if there was any ill person in this town, there was no way he was going to get any rest in this environment.

We are told that in some Masaajid there is no one present, but cassettes are played over the loudspeaker! There is no one in the Masjid to listen to the cassette, but the entire town is forced to listen to the cassette!

Knowledgeable people who have the correct understanding of Deen, irrespective of their school of thought, will never do such things. These things take place at such Masaajid where the affairs are run by people who lack in their understanding of Deen. Many times they do it with noble intentions thinking this to be a means of conveying the message of Deen and thereby providing a great service. Well**, in our societies an incorrect notion has developed, that a wrong becomes right if the intention is correct!** The reality of the matter is that for an action to be correct it is not sufficient that the intention is only correct. The manner also has to be correct. The usage of the loudspeaker in this way is not only against the fundamental teachings of da'wat and tabligh, but the effects are converse.

Those people who have some misgivings as regards this may ponder over the following points;

1. Umar Ibn Shuba was a famous Muhaddith who compiled the history of Madinah in four volumes, which is used as reference by many scholars. He has narrated the following incident in his compilation. There used to be an orator who used to deliver sermons right outside the door of Ayesha ψ in a loud voice. It is clear that there were no loudspeakers in that era, but he had a loud voice which disturbed the solitude of Ayesha ψ. This was during the reign of Hadhrat Umar τ therefore Hadhrat Ayesha τ complained to him that this person delivers sermons outside her door in a loud voice disturbing my peace and making it impossible for me to hear anyone speaking to me. Hadhrat Umar τ sent a message to him asking him to refrain from conducting his sermons there. After some time the man resumed his sermons. When Hadhrat Umar τ found out, he went to the man personally, and arresting him subjected him to a punitive punishment. (Akhbaarul-MaDeenah *vol.1 pg.15*)

2. It was not a matter of Ayesha ψ just wanting to get rid of the disturbance, but she wanted to clarify and implement an Islaamic social principle. i.e. **No person should cause harm to any other person in any way whatsoever.** She also wanted to show the manner dignified in which da’wah towards Deen should be carried out. We find that Imam Ahmed has recorded a narration wherein Ayesha ψ teaches an orator in detail the etiquettes of giving Da’wah. Amongst the etiquettes we find the following;

   “Keep your voice limited to the people sitting in your gathering. Impart the teachings of Deen to them so long as their attention is directed towards you, should they turn their attention away from you, you should terminate your discourse. It should never happen that you enter a gathering of people who are talking amongst themselves and you interrupt them. On such an occasion, you should remain silent until they request you to speak. You may then begin your discourse of Deen.” (Majmauz-Zawaaid *vol.1 pg.191*)

3. Hadhrat Ataa Ibn Abi Ribaah τ was from amongst the illustrious Taabieen. His knowledge in the field of Ahaadith and Tafseer is accepted by all. He once said, “An Aalim should not raise his voice beyond his congregation.” (Adabul Imlaa wal Istimlaa *pg.5*)

4. All these etiquettes in reality have been deduced from the sayings and teachings of the Nabi ρ. The incident of Hadhrat Umar τ is famous. Nabi ρ once passed by Hadhrat Umar τ whilst he was performing Tahajjud Salaah and his recital was loud. Nabi ρ asked him why he was reading so loud. He said that he intended waking up those who were asleep and chase shaytan away. Nabi ρ then asked him to lower his voice. (Mishkat *vol.1 pg.107*)

Besides this, it has been narrated from Ayesha τ that whenever Nabi ρ would awake for Tahajjud Salaah, he would gently come out of the bed (so as not to disturb the sleeping person.)

5. It is in the light of these very Ahaadith that the jurists say that it not permissible for the recitation of Tahajjud Salaah to be in such a loud voice that it disturbs the sleep of others. The jurists say that any person who recites (the Quraan) in such a loud voice which disturbs the sleep of others, is guilty of sinning. (Shaami *vol.1 pg.403 and 444*)

A questionnaire was once sent out to various Iftaa departments posing the following question: The Qiraat of the Taraweeh Salaah is played out aloud over the loud speakers in certain Masaajid. This makes it difficult for the women living in those areas to concentrate in their Salaah. Those who are aged and sick, and need to sleep early due to health reasons, cannot sleep. Besides, those on the outside of the Masjid are unable to pay due respect to the recitation of the Quraan. Many a time an Aayat of Sajdah is recited which makes Sajdah necessary on those outside also, but they either do not realize it, or are not in the state of wudhu, or they forget, thereby not making the Sajdah. Under the above mentioned circumstances, will it be permissible to relay the Taraaweeh Salaah over the loud speaker?

All the Iftaa departments to which this question was posed unanimously agreed that to unnecessarily relay the Taraaweeh Salaah under such circumstances can never be permissible. This fatwa is found in the Muharram 1407 edition of the monthly newsletter “Albalaagh” and in actual fact is an agreed upon fatwa by the Ulama all schools of thought.

The month of Ramadaan is dawning on us. This month demands strict adherence to the laws of Shariah from us. This is a month of worship. The more Zikr, recitation, and Salaah we perform, the greater the virtue. Though, we should bear in mind that all these acts of worship should be carried out in a manner which will not cause

disturbance to anyone. We should not destroy these acts of worship by adopting impermissible methods of performing them. The loud speaker should be used within necessity and at the time of need, not beyond.

From all that has been mentioned above, we can now see how much care Shariah has taken in ensuring that no harm reaches anyone in any way. When so much emphasis has been laid on ensuring that the noble act of recitation and delivering sermons of Deen should be done in such a place and manner where no person is disturbed, one can well imagine the magnitude of the harmful consequences of playing music or anything vain over the loud speaker? (Zikr-wa-Fikr *pgs.24-29*)

A companion of a few days:

At every step of life man has to interact and have relationships with others. Some of these relationships are life long, like family relations, while others are not lifelong, but long term, like neighbours. There is yet another type of relationship which lasts just a few hours or so, like a companion on a journey in a plane, train or bus etc.

The Quraan has looked into these three types of relationships with a microscopic eye, and has also emphasized the importance of fulfilling the rights of all these relationships. People understand the importance of fulfilling the rights of the first two types of relationships to a certain extent. Reasons being that non adherence will result in disgrace as these are long term relationship and the resultant disgrace will also therefore be long term. As for the third type, which is the very temporary companionship of a person, very few people take into consideration their rights. The reason for this is that these relationships are generally with strangers and once separated, sometimes one never meets up with (that stranger) for the rest of his life again. There is generally no fear of any long term embarrassment in the event of some wrong done. People think that, “If he gets the wrong impression about me, who cares? I do not have

to ever meet with him. His impression of me does not really affect my life." Therefore nowadays in buses, trains, planes and all public modes of transport, the pushing, shoving, and individualistic attitude of people pushing others with their elbows to get ahead is a branch and result of this very mentality.

Where the Quraan has emphasized the rights of the neighbour and relatives, it has specifically mentioned a temporary companion by using the words "Sahib-bil-jamb" (Surah Nisaa verse.36) which could be literally translated as, "companion by your side." This implies that person who is temporarily in ones companionship, e.g. on a journey or in some public mode of transport like a bus, the person sitting nearest is your "Sahib-bil-jamb." The person seated next to us at some function or gathering is also our "Sahib-bil-jamb." The Quraan has specifically made mention of such people and emphasized the importance of showing kindness towards such people, as this is where the test of a person's character and nobility becomes apparent. Many intellectuals and people who in their daily environments appear to be very cultured and well mannered are found to be wanting in culture when one travels with them. All their apparent manners and culture and suddenly left by the wayside, and they begin treating their companions travelling with them in an inferior and self centered manner.

It is for this very reason that Hadhrat Umar τ said that one should only bare testimony (of the character) of another person if one has had a monetary transaction with that person, and he found him straight in his dealings or one has travelled with him and found him to have good manners and good character whilst travelling.

The fact of the matter is; what character is there, when it is displayed for fear of being embarrassed? That is just showing off. When this fear of embarrassment passes by, the reality of the evil character of a person becomes apparent. **Good character is an inner quality which is separated from fame and embarrassment.** It becomes manifest when good is done solely because it is good, and it is such

character which earns the pleasure of Allaah. When a person acquires this quality, his dealings in every sphere are in accordance with this quality. Even though there is no one who can see him. All his actions will be done in the shadow of this pure nature of his, keeping this reality in mind that probably no one can see me, but the one who makes the decision of Jannat and Jahannam is definitely watching.

Let us take a few examples of how the teachings of Islaam have looked at the "Sahib-bil-jamb" with a microscopic eye:

1. On the day of Friday, when people gather for Jumuah, the person coming in late is ordered by Shariah to sit wherever he finds place to the rear of the gathering, and not jump over the shoulders of others. Nabi ρ had displayed anger to such behavior.

2. We have been encouraged to take a bath, wear clean clothes and apply itr (perfume) before proceeding to the Masjid for Jumuah, so that in a large gathering every person becomes a source of comfort to the next and not discomfort.

3. The jurists have gone to the extent of saying that a person who has a sickness due to which a foul smell emanates from him causing discomfort to others, should perform his Salaah at home and not join the congregation. Insha-Allaah he will receive the reward of congregational Salaah.

4. When a few people are eating together, we are taught to consider the others eating as well. It has been mentioned in the Hadith that Nabi ρ said, "When others are taking one date at a time, you should not take two dates at a time." **This points to the principle of not worrying of oneself alone, but consider the others as well, as this (thinking of oneself only)** is not the trait of a believer. We should remember that there are others eating too. We do not have to now measure our share of food, but we should have some form of balance.

(These days in buffet style meals, the manner in which we see some people dishing out more than necessary is a direct result of open violation of these principles.)

I have just given a few examples highlighting the importance which Shariah gives to the "Sahib-bil-jamb." Each person can look into his society and evaluate some petty issues.

Where many people have gathered for some type of work and one person can be seen to at a time, common sense demands that a line is formed so that each person can have their work done in an orderly manner. In this way everyone will benefit and everyone's work will be done with ease. To jump the line and push ahead in such a situation without any valid reason, is not just an immoral and uncultured act, but it is gravely usurping the right of the others and a sin.

It is sad to note that the non-Muslims take this into consideration (yet we Muslims lack in this regard.) Wherever more than one person get together where only one can be seen at a time, they would immediately stand in line formation. Whereas we, who have the guidance of "Sahib-bil-jamb" found in the Quraan and the Sunnat, consider it some kind of skill to jump the line and show our bravery! One wonders if the thought even crosses the mind that I am committing a sin by such an action.

In a bus or train, we are entitled to that amount of the seat which has been stipulated by the operators. We find two serious injustices on our part in these situations.

The first injustice is that without any booking those who climb on board first, occupy a few seating places leaving the other passengers forced to stand. Now is this not a grave injustice that you stretch yourself over a few seats with or without a valid ticket, while the others who have valid tickets are left standing? I have heard regarding many of our senior scholars that they would not occupy

more than the designated seating space, even though the coach was empty. They would say that we have paid for one seat only; therefore we are entitled to one seat and not more. This is definitely their high level of precaution and piety. Normally operators of such modes of transport give permission to use more than one seat if there aren't other passengers; therefore we will not say it is impermissible to use more than one seat. Certainly where other passengers are now forced to stand, there can be no permissibility to occupy more than one seat.

The second injustice on our part is that where the seating has been designated to seat four persons, a fifth person decides to come and squeeze himself in. Those who were already seated are now forced to sit uncomfortably. The result of this is that those who were rightfully seated will now have to scrunch and travel in discomfort. Obviously if those seated give preference to the new comer and allow him to sit, this is out of the goodness of their heart which they will be rewarded for, but a new comer has no right to force them to give him place.

Due to us having restricted Deen to Salaah and fasting, we do not even realize that we are indulging in sin when we carry out such acts. Whereas, any act which causes unnecessary discomfort to the next, or by which the right of the next is usurped, is forbidden. It is such a forbidden act which is not pardonable by virtue of repentance alone, but the one whose right was usurped will also have to forgive the transgressor.

Outwardly it seems like trivial issues, but in reality it is these very trivial issues which spoil the temperament and nature of individuals and nations. When the temperament and nature of a nation is spoilt all those things take place which we lament today to no avail or benefit. Everyone suffers the loss. No person lives in peace. Everyone lives in misery.

On the contrary, if each one of us look into our daily lives and see how we can give comfort to those we interact with on a day to day basis, sacrificing a little on our part, we will find that the sacrifice

will be temporary, but the impression left on the heart of the next will be long lasting. Above all, Allaah will be please and we will receive the cash return of our sacrifice on that day when no worldly currency would be of any use. In this way the temperament and nature of our society will slowly but surely change to one where each person is a source of comfort for the next. (Zikr-wa-Fikr *pgs.260-265*)

About the book

The important yet neglected topic has been dealt with in a combined manner. Firstly, from classical sources, the Quraan and Sunnat and secondly, by narrations of wonderful, encouraging stories of the yester years pious and current examples are presented.

The book explains the definition of ‘neighbour’ and the rights and importance of proper interaction with neighbours. What to do, when to do it and why to do it has been detailed. This is a book to be read and implemented in our lives.